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ABSTRACT

A growing body of research indicates that teachers have different job skills, knowledge, behavior, attitudes, and concerns at different points in their careers. Many of these changes seem to follow a regular developmental pattern from which three stages can be discerned. Stage I is the survival stage, during which beginning teachers are concerned about their skill in maintaining classroom control, teaching content areas, and in continuing to develop their teaching abilities. Teachers at Stage II, during the second, third, and fourth years of teaching experience, adjust to the teaching situation and gain confidence in handling most classroom situations. These teachers are more likely to be able to assess their own needs and seek assistance. In the third stage, after five years of teaching experience, teachers reach a professional maturity and are skilled in a variety of techniques. They are more committed to their careers at this stage. Studies have shown that: (1) The first four years of teaching is the primary time of job skills acquisition; (2) By the third stage, most teachers change their techniques rather than their philosophy of teaching; and (3) Stages of professional development have a significant effect on personal development. Appended is a table showing a matrix of the three stages and the changes in professional characteristics experienced at each stage. (FG)

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Professional Development as a Stressor

Helen Snyder finds that the students are not reacting to her lessons as she had hoped but has not changed her teaching strategies very much to see if other approaches work better. She takes time to read the curriculum guide and textbooks but still has difficulty devising interesting lessons to teach the subject matter. Helen has some discipline problems and has had difficulty determining the causes of these problems and selecting appropriate ways to deal with these problems. Much time is spent in evenings and on weekends for lesson planning, grading papers, and material preparation. Helen feels uncertain and doesn't allow much of her personality to show in her teaching.

Ed Taylor sees that the students have certain interests and needs and is willing to consider these when he plans. He is concerned about using a variety of teaching strategies to meet the wide range of interests and abilities he sees in his students, and he is familiar with the curriculum and other resource books. Ed recognizes some of the reasons for behavioral and learning problems and adjusts his teaching and methods accordingly. He feels comfortable enough in the classroom to let his own personality show. Ed has adjusted his planning, preparation, and organizational procedures and consequently does not need to take very much work home.

Sylvia Harrison feels fairly confident of her teaching abilities and feels that she can be herself in her classroom. She is concerned about developing a positive classroom learning environment and having a good rapport with each child. Sylvia recognizes the wide range of student interests and abilities and has a variety of instructional approaches to accommodate these differences. She also looks for different ways of teaching to keep it interesting for herself. Sylvia knows her curriculum well and also has developed effective discipline and classroom management techniques. She prefers to complete most of her planning and paper work at school so that her school responsibilities do not interfere with her personal life.

These three teachers are representative of teachers at various career stages. A growing body of research indicates that teachers have different job skills, knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, and concerns at different points in their careers (e.g.- Burden, 1979, 1980; Fuller, 1969; Fuller and Bown, 1975; Newman, 1978; Peterson, 1978). Studies also show that many of these changes follow a regular developmental pattern. Therefore, teachers in their first year may have a predictable set of developmental characteristics; fourth year teachers, for example, have an equally predictable, but different set of developmental characteristics. Because of the changing developmental characteristics, teachers are likely to experience stress from various sources at different points in their careers. Teachers may not expect that their attitudes, concerns, skills, and needs would change over time -- but they do. Because of these changes, teachers must deal with new circumstances of their professional development. These changing needs can be both challenging and stressful.

Characteristics of teacher career development will be identified and discussed in this paper. In addition, stress which is experienced at each career stage will be identified and ways to reduce the stress will be discussed.

Teacher Career Development and Stress

Teacher career development deals with the changes teachers experience throughout their careers. These changes occur in the teachers': (1) <u>job skills, knowledge, and behaviors</u> - in areas such as teaching methods, discipline strategies, curriculum, planning, rules and procedures; (2) <u>attitudes and outlooks</u> - in areas such as images of teaching, professional confidence

and maturity, willingness to try new teaching methods, satisfactions, and concerns; and (3) job events - in areas such as changes in grade level, school, or district; involvement in additional professional responsibilities; and age of entry and retirement.

Teachers' perceptions of their personal and professional development for their entire careers were revealed in an interview study with experienced teachers (Burden, 1979, 1980). Details concerning research design, methodology, and findings can be found in these earlier reports.

In Burden's study, public school teachers provided rich details about their professional lives, and in doing so revealed characteristics of their professional development.

Information about job skills, knowledge, and behaviors were reported in five areas: (1) knowledge of teaching activities, (2) knowledge of teaching environment, (3) professional insight and perception, (4) approach to curriculum and instruction, and (5) obtaining assistance and new ideas. Changes in teachers' attitudes and outlooks were reported in four areas: (1) changing images about teaching, (2) professional confidence, security, and maturity, (3) willingness to try new teaching methods, and (4) career plans. Changes in job events included changes in grade level, school buildings, and school districts. Table 1 displays a summary of the teachers' perceptions of their professional development.

The information provided by the teachers in the above categories indicated that there were stages of teacher career development.

Stage I will be called a survival stage, which for this group of teachers occurred during the first year of teaching. Stage II was an adjustment stage, which for this group included the second, third, and fourth years. Stage III

was a mature stage, which for this group included the fifth year and beyond. It should be noted that the teachers in this study had some common demographic characteristics (e.g.- all started public school teaching in their early 20's) and that might have been a factor in the similar developmental characteristics being expressed by most teachers. Other teachers may express similar developmental characteristics but take more or less time at each stage.

Stage I, the survival stage, seemed to be distinct because it presented unique conditions and experiences for the teachers. Many of the professional characteristics exhibited during the first year were intertwined. For example, feelings of confusion and uncertainty existed concurrently with the teachers' limited knowledge of the teaching environment and activities of teaching. At this time the teachers adhered to a previously formed image of teachers and teaching, and taught in a traditional manner. They were unwilling to try new teaching methods until they had mastered the traditional methods. They had little insight into the complexity of their teaching environment. It appears that because they did not recognize the complexity of the environment and had limited knowledge and skills, they taught the subject rather than the child.

The teachers recalled their first teaching year as a time of concern about themselves in relation to their professional responsibilities. They were primarily concerned about their adequacy in: (1) maintaining classroom control, (2) teaching the subject, and (3) improving their teaching skills -- lesson planning, organizing units and materials, grading, and knowing the curriculum and what to teach. Many teachers expressed feelings of inadequacy in each area and consequently were concerned about their success as a teacher.

The first year concerns expressed by the teachers are in line with characteristics discussed by other researchers and teacher educators. Unruh and Turner (1970) suggested that the problems of the novice include discipline, routine and organization, scoring and marking papers, and curriculum development. Fuller (1969, 1970) and Fuller and Bown (1975) suggested that early concerns about the self and personal survival focused on content adequacy, capacity to control the class, and the ability to survive as a teacher in the new school situation. Applegate and associates (1977, and Ryan et al., 1980) reported first year concern for the self when managing a classroom, confronting discipline problems, evaluating student progress, and worrying about his/her own competence in teaching a particular subject.

Many teachers were concerned about surviving each day and completing the school year. These findings are in line with the first year survival focus discussed by Fuller (1969); Fuller, Parsons, and Watkins (1973); Katz (1972) and Lortie (1966, 1973).

Several teachers approached the early years of teaching as a trial period. They were not certain if they wanted to make a career of teaching in the early years and used their experiences to determine their future course of action.

Teachers in Stage I, the survival stage, were uncertain and confused about many aspects of the job. They didn't feel confident and were not certain how the situation would improve. They often were not sure how to deal with certain problems, were frustrated, and wondered if they were "measuring up." They also expressed the need to feel confident, effective, and competent in the first year but apparently did not achieve these feelings

at that time. Because of the teachers' feelings of uncertainty about themselves, they were hesitant to try different teaching techniques and sometimes did not know what to do or how things would get better.

Much of their uncertainty in the survival stage resulted from their feelings of inadequacy in: (1) maintaining classroom control, (2) teaching the subject, and (3) improving their teaching skills. The teachers' feelings of stress, therefore, were primarily a result of concerns about their job skills, knowledge, and behaviors.

There were additional areas of stress in the first stage. The teachers were attempting to confirm their career decision. Also, the teachers experienced stress because their professional responsibilities (e.g. - time for planning, preparation, grading, reviewing the curriculum) took a great deal of time and cut into their personal time during evenings and weekends.

Teachers at Stage I, the survival stage, need assistance in many technical skills of teaching (e.g.-lesson planning, record keeping, teaching strategies, handling discipline). Despite training and experience in these areas during preservice teacher preparation, teachers still felt weak in these areas and needed a person to come in and show them how to perform and refine certain skills. Beginning teachers also needed specific information about the curriculum and school rules and procedures.

Stage II, the adjustment stage, was a time when the teachers learned a great deal but did not feel like they were able to handle everything that happened in the classroom.

Just as in the first year of teaching, many professional characteristics which the teachers displayed in Stage II in the second, third, and fourth years are intertwined. As teachers became more knowledgeable about

the teaching environment and teaching activities, they were more relaxed and confident. They had mastered some initial teaching skills and were confident about trying new teaching methods. They knew more about the children and were starting to perceive the complexities in teaching them. They also knew what did and did not work and could abandon their preconceived images of teacher behavior.

The teachers in this second stage became less concerned with the teaching situation as a problem area. This confirms the stage of teaching situation concerns expressed by Fuller and Bown (1975).

There were several notable differences in the teachers' professional characteristics when comparing their second, third, and fourth years (the adjustment stage) to their first year (the survival stage). The teachers were much more comfortable with their teaching in this second phase of development. They were more relaxed and not as nervous as they were the first year. They stopped worrying about themselves and started looking at larger concerns in the teaching situation. As they started to see the complexities in the children, they sought new teaching techniques to meet the wider range of needs they were beginning to perceive in their second, third, and fourth years. Also, the teachers expressed more of their own personalities in the classroom by letting themselves be more open and genuine with the children. Their experience increased their knowledge and abilities, and the teachers felt they were developing skills and meeting the children's needs more capably.

Katz (1972) called the second year the consolidation stage in which the teacher consolidates the overall gains made in the first stage and differentiates specific tasks and skills to be mastered next. Teachers

in this study exhibited these characteristics in the second, third, and fourth year period. Katz did not discuss what the specific tasks and skills were whereas the teachers in this study identified specific professional characteristics for this time period. Katz further labeled the third or fourth years as the renewal stage where the teachers tire of doing the same things and look at innovations in the field. Teachers in this study sought different teaching techniques in this period primarily to meet the children's needs rather than to break away from worn out methods as Katz had noted.

Teachers in Stage II, the adjustment stage, were gaining confidence and were more comfortable with what they were doing, with the subject matter, and with the teaching techniques they were using. The teachers were more relaxed and sure of themselves but still didn't feel capable of handling any situation which might arise.

The adjustment stage was a time when the teachers started to see the complexities in the children and sought new teaching techniques to meet the wider range of needs they were beginning to perceive. Their feelings of stress at this stage often centered on their adequacy in varying their instruction and meeting the wide range of student needs. They were less concerned about themselves and more concerned with meeting individual students' needs.

Teachers at Stage II, the adjustment stage, have learned from their first year experiences and have acquired job skills and information in a number of areas. They are more able to look at their needs more objectively and seek out assistance.

Stage III, the mature stage, was a time when most of the teachers felt that they were mature teachers and felt they could handle anything

that happened in their teaching.

Many of the professional characteristics exhibited in Stage III in the fifth year and beyond were intertwined. When the teachers had a good command of teaching activities and understood the teaching environment, they felt confident, mature and secure. They used what worked for them and abandoned the image of a teacher they thought they had to fulfill. Since they had mastered many of the initial teaching skills and were confident with new situations, they were continually willing to try new teaching methods. As they became more perceptive, they recognized the complex needs of the children and adopted a more child-centered approach to curriculum and instruction.

The teachers in their fifth year and beyond were concerned with meeting the needs of the children and with their relationship to the children. This confirms the stage of concerns about pupils reported by Fuller and Bown (1975).

Teachers in the mature stage knew what they were doing, where they were going, and what they wanted to do. They felt secure with the teaching duties and were competent in their performance of them.

The teachers accepted change as a continual process rather than a threat. Their reasons for trying new teaching methods were different at this stage as compared to earlier stages. Earlier, the teachers were either unwilling to try new teaching methods or tried them to better meet the needs of the students. By this mature stage, the teachers had become skilled in a variety of techniques and continually tried additional techniques to increase their competence, to passively accept change, and to keep teaching interesting for themselves. The teachers focused on their own personal improvement and challenge.

The last reason for trying new teaching methods in the mature stage -- to keep their teaching interesting for themselves -- significantly affected the behavior of some teachers. The teachers felt they were meeting the needs of the children but also wanted to meet their own needs. To prevent boredom, they sometimes changed grade levels, schools, or aspects of their classrooms (learning centers, room arrangements, schedules, etc.).

Information from this study seems to confirm characteristics of the maturing period as described by Unruh and Turner (1970). Teachers in this study generally exhibited the acceptance of change as a continual process early in this last stage (around the fifth to seventh years) as compared to the fifteenth year or later as suggested by Unruh and Turner.

Feelings of professional maturity were experienced in the first decade of teaching, thus confirming Newman's (1978) description of teachers at that stage of career development. Newman indicated that teachers in the end of their second decade of teaching felt like they were "getting into a rut" and changed schools and/or grade levels in an attempt to revitalize themselves. The teachers in this study expressed these concerns much earlier, as early as the fifth year in some cases.

Teachers in the early years, years one through four, were primarily building knowledge and skills, and were determining if they wanted to make a career of teaching. This information concurs with Super's (1975, pp 28-29) description of the exploratory stages (ages 15-25) of career development when individuals determine their aptitudes and interests, and attempt to find a satisfactory occupation through a variety of activities, roles and situations.

Teachers in the fifth year and beyond generally became more committed

to their careers and were satisfied with their chosen profession. Super (1957, chapter 9; 1975, p 29) described the establishment stage (ages 24-45) of career development as a time for deciding what seems to be the best occupational choice, and for stabilizing and advancing a career. Information seems to confirm these career development characteristics for the teachers in this study.

Teachers in Stage III expressed a growing concern for themselves and their own well being. They wanted to improve and be challenged and yet they were concerned about the tension resulting from teaching. Since they did not want to take job tensions home with them, many teachers tried to separate their personal and professional lives. They also found ways in their personal lives to release the tension they had experienced in teaching.

Teachers in Stage III, the mature stage, felt that they were mature teachers. They felt confident, competent, and secure. They felt that they could handle any situation that might come along. They were willing to try new techniques, to learn more things, and to continually grow and develop to become better teachers. The teachers were able to vary their instruction and meet the needs of individual students by this time. Stress which teachers experienced in the mature stage seemed to center on the teachers' ability to keep teaching interesting for themselves. Stress was also experienced because of changes in school procedures and educational expectations (e.g.-dealing with mainstreamed children, paperwork required by the district).

Teachers at Stage III, the mature stage, have a good command of the job skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary to be effective. They feel confident and mature and they are interested in varying their instruction to meet indi-

vidual student needs and also to add variety for themselves. Teachers at this stage have competence in many job skills and behaviors and are capable of objectively assessing their performance.

Some conclusions can be drawn when all three career stages are examined. Most changes in acquisition of necessary job skills and behaviors were reported for the first four years of teaching; in fact, the distinctions were clear enough to identify two yearly groups (first year; and second, third, and fourth years). The teachers identified more of their skill acquisitions during the years when they were mastering their skills (in years one through four - the survival and adjustment stages) compared to the years after they mastered the skills (the fifth year and beyond - the mature stage). Teachers were learning new skills in their later years through workshops and other means but did not identify those changes in the same detail as they had for their early years.

Most changes in attitudes and outlooks came gradually, with more changes being identified in the first four years. Many teachers by the fifth year had become committed to a particular philosophy for dealing with children; by this stage they changed only their techniques rather than their philosophy.

Most changes in job events (grade levels, schools, districts) occurred within the first several years and the teachers then made relatively fewer changes. There were more changes in job events such as involvement in extra activities in the fifth year and later.

The teachers' accumulated experience appeared to significantly affect their personal and professional development. As they increased their knowledge of children, the subject matter, teaching techniques and other

aspects of teaching, the teachers had more resources to draw upon when confronting new situations. When the teachers increased their knowledge, their attitudes changed about their teaching, which subsequently led to a change in abilities and job performance. The teachers, for example, reported that their first year was very important because they learned so much about teaching. That knowledge affected their attitude toward teaching when they discovered they were deficient in performing many aspects of the job. With the increased knowledge and changes in attitude, the teachers changed their abilities and subsequently their job performance to meet the job demands better.

The teachers' knowledge accumulated yearly, leading to changes in job performance. Knowing they had this expanding repertoire of knowledge and skills, the teachers felt confident and mature in their fifth year and later years.

Conclusion

Teacher career development deals with changes teachers undergo throughout their careers in job skills, knowledge, and behaviors; attitudes and outlooks; and job events. Burden (1979) reported three stages of teacher career development with developmental characteristics being identified in each of the above categories. Because of these developmental characteristics, teachers experience different types of stress at various points in their careers.

TABLE 1

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

	PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	STAGE 1 SURVIVAL STAGE First Year	STAGE 2 ADJUSTMENT STAGE Second, Third, and Fourth Years	STAGE 3 MATURE STAGE Fifth Year and Beyond
JOB SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND BEHAVIORS	KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES	Limited knowledge of teaching methods, lesson planning, record keeping, motivating and disciplining students, and organizational skills	Increasing knowledge and skills in these areas	Good command of these teaching activities
	KNOWLEDGE OF TEACHING ENVIRONMENT	Limited knowledge of children's characteristics (e.g. personalities, behaviors, attention spans, achievement levels), school curriculum, school rules and regulations	Increasing knowledge and skills in these areas	Good command of the teaching environment
	PROFESSIONAL INSIGHT AND PERCEPTION	Limited insight into the children or school environment; unable to see themselves objectively; wrapped up in their own activities	Gradually gained insight into the complexities of the professional environment; saw children in more complex ways and were able to respond to their needs more capably	
	APPROACH TO CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION	Subject-Centered curricular approach; limited personal contact with the children	Transitional period with more concern for the child's self-concept	Child-Centered curricular approach; more concerned with teaching the individual child and creating a positive classroom environment
ATTITUDES AND OUTLOOKS	CHANGING IMAGES OF TEACHING	Adopted an image of what a teacher should be and conformed to that image; taught traditionally	Gradually stopped conforming to the image and started using techniques that worked best for them; let their own personalities come out more	
	PROFESSIONAL CONFIDENCE, SECURITY, AND MATURITY	Feelings of inadequacy; uncertain and confused about many aspects of the job; worried about how to teach and about not teaching correctly	More comfortable with subject matter and teachniques; more relaxed and sure of themselves	Feelings of being a mature teacher; confident and secure
	WILLINGNESS TO TRY NEW TEACHING METHODS	Unwilling to try new methods while trying to master initial skills	Willing to continually experiment with different techniques after mastering some initial skills; saw the need to use more methods to meet children's needs	Willing to continually experiment with new techniques to increase their competence, to passively accept change, or to keep teaching interesting for themselves

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